

May 18, 1967

TO: Boston Redevelopment Authority

FROM: Edward J. Logue, Development Administrator

SUBJECT: SOUTH END URBAN RENEWAL AREA (MASS. R-56)  
DEVELOPMENT ACQUISITION

SUMMARY. In a letter from the Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Boston, the status of the Archdiocese's development plans for the South End are outlined, including plans for expansion of Cathedral High School, continuation and development of community service programs, and a request for acquisition of certain underutilized properties.

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In a letter to me, dated May 16, 1967, copy attached, Rt. Rev. Francis J. Sexton, Chancellor, Archdiocese of Boston, expressed the firm intent and expectation of the Archdiocese to participate actively in the renewal and redevelopment of the South End as follows:

"I write to you at the direction of His Eminence, Cardinal Cushing. As you know, the Archdiocese has always had a feeling of close affinity to the South End area of Boston as the site of its Holy Cross Cathedral and the focal point of so many of its Church and religious activities of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The gradual deterioration, both physical and social, of this important section of the core City has been a cause of much concern. Thus, the proposed rehabilitation of this area under the guidance and direction of the Boston Redevelopment Authority is of great interest and importance. It is the hope, in fact, the firm intent and expectation of the Archdiocese to participate actively in the expected renaissance of the district. To that end, many conferences, both internal and with outside consultants, have been held to develop Archdiocesan programs to implement the South End Urban Renewal plans, with the belief that such programs will contribute to the physical improvement of the area and better serve the present spiritual and social needs of the community.

"Such plans and programs are not yet complete. However, some steps have reached the point where they should be communicated to your Board for its consideration and for its hoped-for approval".



## Cathedral High School Expansion.

"The Archdiocese is most interested in expanding the Cathedral High School, both in area and additional construction. Although plans are not complete and a definite time schedule cannot be submitted at this time, anticipated construction and area development would be well into six figures and even seven figures in value. To this end, we are prepared to negotiate for the acquisition of sites 32A and 32C of the Authority's renewal plan extending the school locus to Savoy Street between Washington Street and Harrison Avenue. Incidentally, the Archdiocese, by private purchase, has already acquired the property, 1336 Washington Street at the corner of Waltham Street. This is part of site 32C. If the Authority decides to transfer site 32C to the Archdiocese, it is requested that 1336 Washington Street be deleted from your acquisition list."

Recommendation. In accordance with the South End Plan, Sites 32a and 32c are designated for institutional use and earmarked for expansion of Cathedral High School. I recommend the Archdiocese of Boston be tentatively designated developer of sites 32a and 32c. Also, I recommend that 1336 Washington Street, which is part of site 32c and has already been purchased by the Archdiocese, be deleted from the Authority's acquisition list if the Archdiocese is finally selected as developer of site 32c.

## Community Service Program.

"In the matter of direct service to the South End Community the Archdiocese is already actively engaged in social programs; such as the Cardinal Cushing Centre...the Community of Nuns dedicated to guidance of youth (C.Y.A.C.) and service to the elderly (Lifeline)...and development and administration of an experimental service program for the South End-Roxbury Community.

The Archdiocese is presently involved in an additional experimental service program keyed in large parts to the South End, in an effort to determine how it can best service that area. The results of this experiment are not yet entirely conclusive but we expect that it will help us to decide the location and type of neighborhood service facility we should create in the South End. All conferences and surveys to date indicate that Sites 33A and 33B, on Northampton Street and Massachusetts Avenue would be a desirable location for a community service facility. In settling on this location, we are influenced, at least in part, by the fact that this was the site of old St. Patrick's Church, which held a prominent place in the original development, both physical and spiritual, of this area. Sites 33A and 33B, together fronting on both Northampton Street and Massachusetts Avenue, presently



appear to be a desirable location for a neighborhood facility. Although we cannot at this time set forth a definite time schedule for construction and development, we ask for authorization of your Board to negotiate for purchase of these site areas."

Recommendation. While sites 33a and 33b are designated for housing, I feel the Authority should cooperate with the Archdiocese in its efforts to determine how the Archdiocese can best service the South End area. Accordingly, I recommend the Board grant authorization to negotiate with the Archdiocese respecting sites 33a and 33b, with the understanding that the Board will consider the question of a tentative developer-designation when the Archdiocese completes its experiment and presents its program to the Authority for its consideration.

#### Acquisition of Underutilized Properties.

"As the redevelopment and rehabilitation of the South End requires the expansion of some Archdiocesan activities in the area, it conversely suggests the curtailment of other activities. St. Philip's Church and Rectory, 889-893 Harrison Avenue, is one such area of former activity. When established in the latter part of the 19th century and completed about the time of World War I, it fulfilled a need of the times and the district. Changing conditions in the area, a gradual erosion of the congregation and reduction of parishioners, greatly accelerated by industrial development, call for a review of the need for continuance of this parish as such. Fairly recent rehabilitation of the property has not resulted in an increase in its use by the parishioners in the South End Community. Further rehabilitation would be economically unfeasible if, in fact, it were necessary in view of recent physical updating. The Catholic population in the area can be adequately and conveniently served and its religious requirements provided by adjacent parish churches. Change in the use and activities of the property would be difficult, if not impossible, even if economically feasible. It is submitted that the overall redevelopment of the area can best be accomplished through acquisition of this property by the Authority. It is requested that such acquisition be negotiated by the Authority and the Archdiocese.

Also, the Church of Our Lady of the Annunciation, 157 West Canton Street at Warren Avenue, is not longer necessary to the Archdiocese in its future plans. This is a 'national' Church so-called, serving Catholics of Lebanese ancestry from the greater Boston area, as well as serving the spiritual needs of Catholics



in the area. A new 'national' Church for the Lebanese of the area has been constructed in West Roxbury. The spiritual needs of local residents of the area can easily be served by the Cathedral of the Holy Cross, Washington Street, easily accessible to the Catholic population of this area of the South End. Here also the costs of rehabilitation and the difficulty in converting the use of the property, move us to suggest acquisition of this property, exclusive of the rectory, by the Boston Redevelopment Authority. It is requested that such acquisition be negotiated by the Authority and the Archdiocese.

Finally, the Archdiocese owns vacant land, formerly 455-57 Shawmut Avenue. This parcel is too small to develop for any Church use, but added to adjoining footage, could undoubtedly be advantageously developed by the Authority. This would also give the Authority a greater measure of control over its future use. We request that acquisition of this parcel be negotiated."

Recommendation. In order to ensure that these presently underutilized properties are eventually put to a use which will strengthen implementation of the South End Plan, I recommend BRA negotiate acquisition of the properties as requested.



RESOLUTION OF THE BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
RE: PROPOSED DISPOSITION OF PARCELS 32A AND 32C  
IN THE SOUTH END URBAN RENEWAL AREA  
PROJECT NO. MASS R-56

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WHEREAS, the Boston Redevelopment Authority, hereinafter referred to as the "Authority" has entered into a contract for loan and grant with the Federal Government under Title I of the Housing Act of 1949, as amended, which contract provides for financial assistance to the hereinafter identified project; and

WHEREAS, the Urban Renewal Plan for the South End Urban Renewal Area, Project No. Mass. R-56, hereinafter referred to as the "Project Area" has been duly reviewed and approved in full compliance with local, state, and federal law; and

WHEREAS, the Authority is cognizant of the conditions that are imposed in the undertaking and carrying out of urban renewal projects with federal financial assistance under said Title I, including those prohibiting discrimination because of race, color, creed, or national origin; and

WHEREAS, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Boston, a corporation sole, has expressed a desire to purchase Disposition Parcels 32A and 32C in the South End for the purpose of expanding the Cathedral High School;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY:

1. That the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Boston, a corporation sole, be and hereby is tentatively designated as redeveloper of Disposition Parcels 32A and 32C, subject to submission within 120 days of the following documents satisfactory to the Authority:

- a. Preliminary site plan, indicating proposed development on this site;
- b. Proposed construction schedule;
- c. Concurrence in the proposed disposition transaction by the Department of Housing and Urban Development;
- d. Publication of all public disclosures and issuance of all approvals required by Chapters 121 and 121A of the Massachusetts General Laws and Title I of the Housing Act of 1949, as amended.

2. That disposal of said parcels by negotiation is the appropriate method of making the land available for redevelopment.

3. That it is hereby determined that the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Boston, a corporation sole, possesses the qualifications and financial resources necessary to acquire and develop the land in accordance with the Urban Renewal Plan for the Project Area.

4. That the Secretary is hereby authorized and directed to publish notice of the proposed disposal transaction in accordance with Section 105(E) of the Housing Act of 1949, as amended, including information with respect to the "Redeveloper's Statement for Public Disclosure" (Federal Form H-6004).